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THE

GALLERY OF PICTURES

PAINTED BY

BENJAMIN WEST ESQR.

HISTORICAL PAINTER,

TO

HIS MAJESTY,

AND

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL

ACADEMY,

ENGRAVED IN OUTLINE

BY

HENRY MOSES.

00080095

TO

THOMAS HOPE, ESQ.

SIR,

I FEEL great pleasure in taking this opportunity of publicly acknowledging how greatly I stand indebted in my profession, to your bounty and encouragement: and that from the very liberal permission of Mr. WEST, in the free use of his Pictures, I trust I am enabled to offer you an acceptable tribute of my gratitude. Your particular encouragement of this species of Engraving, your well known patronage of the elder as well as rising Artists of this country, and your possession and just appreciation of Mr. WEST's paintings, render your name, Sir, peculiarly appropriate to a work of this kind. The honour of affixing one so distinguished to my performances, has been an additional stimulus to the care and exertion requisite to a due translation of the vigorous and truly epic beauties of the President's pencil.

The outlines I have here attempted from such noble Works, as well as those I may hereafter execute, I shall consider as rising into notice by your patronage. That they may not, by any neglect, disappoint your and the public expectation, has been, and will continue to be, the full intention of,

SIR,

Your very respectful

and obliged humble Servant,

HENRY MOSES.

Newman-street, May 1, 1811.

Painted by H. West. P.R.A. Drawn & Engraved by H. Moore.

THETIS BRINGING THE ARMOUR TO ACHILLES.

From the Original Picture in the possession of Thomas Hope Esqr.

Published May 1.1811 by H. Moore. 65. Newman Street.

PLATE I.

THETIS BRINGING THE ARMOUR TO ACHILLES.

THE great Poets having described their heroes with the utmost force and grace of language, and endowed them with the highest qualities of mind and body, the mere mention of their names excites sentiments and feelings of admiration.

In the delineation, therefore, of these high and immortalized beings, the energies and beauties of the pencil must correspond with those traced by the pen of the poet: the utmost truth and vigour of drawing must be united to the highest conception of character, and a poetic spirit must inform and exalt the piece to such an adequate representation, that the eyes may seem to behold what the imagination has so often fancied with enthusiasm. Such is the impression here made by the graceful form of Thetis, as she bends with sympathetic respect and maternal tenderness over her son; and such is the effect produced by the energetic graces of Achilles, by his deep dejection at the death of his friend, his inflexible resentment, the pathetic prostration of Patroclus, and by the pervading truth, beauty, and animation of the entire piece.

From the inevitable nature of every thing human, the greatest talents are allied to imperfection, and they exhibit them perhaps most conspicuously while in the display of their greatest excellencies. Thus, with respect to one of the greatest painters of Italy, it is impossible not to observe that the daring sublimity of Michael Angelo often degenerates into caricature. It is therefore a distinguished excellence of Mr. West, that in those subjects in which he exhibits some of his highest powers, and in which there is above all others the greatest danger of losing a chaste tone of expression, his judgment never suffers the ardour of his genius to carry his pencil beyond the boundaries of truth and propriety, but "he begets a temperance in the very torrent and tempest of passion." Thus, in this impassioned production, the animated form and stern countenance of Achilles display his ferocity and sullenness, without deviating into any of that intemperate expression which such glowing subjects so naturally induce. Some objections have been made to the proportion of the feet of Achilles; but Mr. West has designated him agreeably to Homer's epithet of the swift-footed Achilles; his swiftness of foot arises from his strength; therefore, the swell of the thigh and calf of the leg, where motion and strength are seated, are comparatively larger in proportion to the feet, than in the common standard of men.

The classic truth of the armour, and the minute but suitable attention to the ornamental parts of the picture, are a full refutation of those, who, having no resolution to study, or no genius for proper combination, would insinuate, that studious correctness in small things is incompatible with a noble genius in great. Genius is indeed the soul of art, but study and science are the bodily powers, without which the hand in vain attempts what the mind would dictate.

R. H.

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Painted by Elliot R.A.

Drawn & Engraved by H.Moses

VENUS RISING FROM THE SEA.

Published May 1 1811 by H.Moses 40 Newman street.

PLATE II.

VENUS RISING FROM THE SEA.

In relation alone to form, this is one of the most difficult subjects in the whole range of pictorical execution; for it not only exhibits the entire female figure, but displays the very essence and concentration of female loveliness, the presiding deity of Beauty itself. Every thing, therefore, short of perfection in so comprehensive a subject, disappoints the high expectation of the spectator, and daring is the hand that ventures on so arduous and perilous an undertaking. It must be the accomplished hand of a great master only, that here succeeds in gratifying a cultivated and tasteful imagination.

In other subjects, various causes conduce to conceal or palliate defect in form, especially where there is much drapery, and vehemence of action or passion. Here the action must be gentle, for it must be eminently graceful; and grace cannot eminently consist with violent action, with sudden and angular turns of the limbs. Ever varying, but gentle undulations of form, with nicest proportion in the whole and separate parts, are the elements of this grace. It is equally distant from monotony and strong contrast. "So stands the statue that enchants the world,"—the Medicean Venus, and such is the Venus here depicted, "in flower of youth and beauty's pride." It may be conceived, perhaps, that a little too much of the latter predominates in the countenance; but the hour is that of triumph; and the Goddess is in her greatest and most royal character, the representative of creative and all-powerful impulse.

Just risen from the womb of the Sea, the Queen of Love and Beauty is attended by a pomp appropriate to her character. The Graces surround, and are actively engaged in decorating her. Her page, the little archer of the heart, is stringing and preparing a bow; doves, the emblems of innocent, ardent and faithful love, precede her way; and a shell, her car, is drawn by swans, whose stately forms shadow out the dignity inseparable from virtuous love.

R. H.

Painted by R.Westall R.A. Drawn by Eberhardt. Engraved by H.Moses

BELISARIUS.

Published May 1.1825, by H. Moses, 61. Newman Street

PLATE III.

BELISARIUS.

Mr. West, availing himself of the fabulous account of the blindness and mendicity of Belisarius, the illustrious Roman General of the sixth century, has depicted an incident which powerfully interests our feelings, in the forcible expression of persecuted and fallen greatness, and in the contrast presented by youthful and aged periods of life.

"That he was deprived of his eyes," says Gibbon, "and reduced by envy to beg his bread, is a fiction of later times, which has obtained credit or rather favour as a strange example of the vicissitude of fortune." Under a false accusation of having plotted against the life of his sovereign, he was disgraced by the Emperor Justinian; but after the lapse of seven months, his innocence was acknowledged, and his freedom and his honours were restored.

The hand of Genius here strikes with pathetic force on the chords of the heart; the arm of persecution, more than the depressing hand of time, bends and debilitates a form finely proportioned and athletic; and the arm of the entrepid warrior, once dreadfully vigorous and invincible, but now subdued by age and calamity, languidly reposes on the shoulder of a youth. The drooping warrior sits the solitary spectacle of injured worth; his health, fortune, and fame blasted by envious power; his venerable aspect asking nothing but speaking every thing, pleads to the heart with the mute dignity of unmerited sorrow, and is seconded by the graceful and simple eloquence of his youthful guide; his disorbed visage is not more expressive of blindness, than the averted and conscious bend of his head, and straight direction of his feet, an attitude most naturally induced by the timidity of one who creeps in darkness. The drapery is cast with Mr. West's unrivalled taste and command of line, expressive of the object it conceals: there is a simplicity and dignity in it suitable to the gravity of the subject; it is ample without heaviness; full without concealment of form; easy, without carelessness; and graceful, without the appearance of study.

R. H.

Painted by B. West P.R.A. Drawn by H. Corbould. Engraved by H. Moses.

THE CAPTIVE.

Published May 1.1806 by H. Moses, 60, Newman Street.

PLATE IV.

THE CAPTIVE.

Vide Sterne's Sentimental Journey.

A SUBJECT of this mournful nature, is perhaps more difficult of expression than most which employ the pencil of the historic painter, as it requires a deviation from those forms of grace and dignity, which are the constant objects of his study, into novel, broken, and, if I may be allowed the phrase, decrepid forms, yet so as not only to avoid presenting what is offensive, but to stamp on the mind a powerful impression of the pathetic. These difficulties are here overcome, and the impression effected, by the delineation of forms involved and angular. The drapery is as judiciously divested of broad masses; for the elegant simplicity of such masses would detract from the due delineation of the haggard, neglected, care-worn wretch, whose spirit and whose frame are sunk down by years of hopelessness, the wreck of all that is mentally happy and corporeally vigorous in human nature. "The iron that appears to enter his soul," inflicts a sympathetic pang of sorrow and pity in our own; and the dejection of our feelings confers an eulogy on the Painter, more honorable to his talent than any that could arise from the critical eloquence of a Winckelmann or a Reynolds.

What particularly strikes the feelings, while it tells in the most complete manner the story of the prisoner's former condition and present misery, is the size of the bones, contrasted with the shrinking and, as it were, daily waste of the muscles: the living flesh seems departing, and the skeleton already anticipating its grave.

R. H.

Painted by S. West R.A.

Drawn & Engraved by H. Moses.

AARON STAYING THE PLAGUE.

Published May 1.1822. by H. Moses. 64. Newman Street.

PLATE V.

AARON STAYING THE PLAGUE.

'And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation, and behold the plague was begun among the people, and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people.

'And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.' *Numbers, Chap.* 16. *v.* 47, 48.

THIS is a subject of so lofty a nature as to require the most vigorous powers of conception and execution. Nothing below excellence could be tolerated in a scene so animated, pathetic and sublime. A people dead and dying of the most dreadful malady, the living eagerly looking for relief, an aged, revered, and sacred character as eagerly rushing to save them from destruction by a sudden and miraculous intervention, are objects of true sublimity, as they impress such strong and varied ideas of terror, pathos, and supernatural agency. In this picture, no critical skill is necessary to point out, to any one of the least sensibility or taste, the admirable and faithful exposition to the eye, of the forcible description in the verses above; for dead to every noble impression must he be, who does not at a glance feel the sublimity of the scene flash into his bosom. All is animated action and energetic expression. The pious confidence of the uninfected, the sadness of the diseased, and the prostration of the dead, carry the mind with most impressive feeling of awe to the central figure of the High Priest, whose flowing drapery, extended arms, impetuous and sacred aspect, emphatically designate his paternal anxiety, and the divine power with which he is invested. He appears indeed like a heaven-commissioned being, while, with the holy incense he dissipates the noxious disease, and with uplifted arm prevents the further advance of the King of Terrors.

The vigour and beauty of the drawing, the noble breadth of the drapery, and the judicious compactness and form of the group, are in perfect unison with the elevated expression of the subject. It is a scene full of the most masterly contrast; energy opposed to langour, mind to body, life to death, and triumph to despair.

R. H.

Painted by B. West P.R.A. Drawn by H. Corbould. Engraved by H. Moses.

CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

Published May 1.1824, by H. Moses, 41, Norman Street.

PLATE VI.

CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

PERSPICUITY, or that quality which conveys ideas to the mind with entire clearness and precision, is one of the highest excellencies in the communication of thought, either through the medium of art, literature, or discourse. This quality was possest in perfection by the august person who forms the central object in this picture. The perfect morality he taught, the practice of which confers the highest attainable excellence and happiness on human nature, was conveyed to the head and heart by language and images the most intelligible and impressive. To the unlettered and ignorant it was equally comprehensive, instructive, and delightful.

Thus, nothing could be more beautiful, and at the same time more impressive, than the symbol which enforces the moral inculcated in this picture, that of purity of heart and conduct. Mr. West has here told the incident and moral of the piece with all the corresponding perspicuity the pencil is capable of, so that a spectator, who had even never read the description of it, would recognize the great teacher impressing on his auditory some important truth drawn from the early age of innocence. In accomplishing this object, the painter has exhibited one of the best tests of a great and commanding talent; he has carried the subject impressively to the mind, though it is a subject unaided by the explanatory appearance of passionate emotion; an amenity that soothes the mind to an agreeable complacency, and a calm dignity that elevates it, are its presiding attributes. The secondary objects are in unison with the chief in producing these effects, which belong to the gracefully simple and dignified forms of a column, and the noble diagonal line of all the figures, except three on the left hand, which obviate the formality it would otherwise present; the drapery too, in an eminent degree, is characteristically accordant with the subject. That of the male figures has a graceful involution and dignified amplitude of fold suitable to the gravity of the wearer. Those of the female and children are as appropriately light and elegant. As the action and expression of all the other figures should carry the attention of the spectator with more impressive force to the main personage, the significant countenances, action and expression of the figures in this piece, are all subordinate to this purpose. Their attention, admiration, or earnest conversation induced by the divine discourse of the Saviour, are so many beautiful luminous rays, converging to the more luminous focus of the picture's expression.

This admirable Picture was the joint purchase of four of the Governors of the Foundling Hospital, who gratuitously presented it as an appropriate Altar-piece for the Chapel of that charitable establishment, where it is now deposited.

R. H.

LIBRARY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Painted by S. West R.A.

Drawn by H. Corbould

Engraved by S. Reeve

ALEXANDER AND HIS PHYSICIAN.

Published June 1, 1821, by S. Reeve, 46, Newman Street.

PLATE VII.

ALEXANDER'S CONFIDENCE IN THE INTEGRITY OF HIS PHYSICIAN.

THERE is nothing more curious or inscrutible in the phenomena of the human mind than its frequent display of inconsistent and opposite qualities in the same possessor. This was strikingly exemplified in the disposition of Alexander, who, if he was deservedly called the Great for his extraordinary and successful talents as a general, and for his occasional practice of exemplary virtue, equally deserved the epithet of Base, for becoming at other times a slave to the most mean and criminal passions, and at last falling a victim to a grovelling appetite. His friendship was succeeded by murderous ingratitude; his compassion by cruelty; his affability by rudeness; his sincerity by treachery; his temperance by luxury; and his magnanimity by suspicion. Thus he murdered Calisthenes, Clitus, and Parmenio, three of his ever faithful veterans; he shed tears over the fallen Darius after ordering his soldiers to give no quarter on entering Asia; he put to death an Indian garrison to which he had just granted honourable terms of capitulation; he died of a fever produced by excessive indulgence in wine, after "resisting the dainties of Asia, and seasoning his simple repasts with exercise and sobriety;" and he who had conquered nations as much by his courage as his talents, suffered his mind to be agitated by foolish fears and distrust. This last feature is no where more conspicuously contrasted than in the noble confidence that forms the subject of the annexed engraving, taken from part of Plutarch's relation of the sickness and cure of Alexander. "Parmenio sent Alexander a letter from the camp, advising him to beware of Philip, whom, he said, Darius had persuaded by presents of infinite value and the promise of his daughter in marriage, to take him off by poison. As soon as Alexander had read the letter, he put it under his pillow without shewing it to any of his friends. The time appointed being come, Philip with the king's friends entered the chamber, having the cup with the medicine in his hand. The king received it freely, without betraying the least symptom of suspicion, and at the same time gave him the letter. It was a striking situation, and more interesting than any scene in a tragedy; the one reading while the other was drinking. They looked on each other but with a different air. The king with an open and unembarrassed countenance, expressed his regard for Philip, and the confidence which he had in his honour; Philip's look exhibited his indignation at the calumny. One while he lifted up his eyes and hands to heaven, protesting his fidelity; another while he threw himself by the bed side, entreating his sovereign to be of good courage, and to rely on his care." The settled poise of Alexander's body, as well as his equally settled countenance, which is no otherwise disturbed than by sickness, exhibit a fine portrait of that generous reliance on his friend and physician which does him more honour than all his conquests, inasmuch as one moral excellence is infinitely superior in genuine worth and dignity to all the talents which enabled him to conquer. The just indignation of the physician exemplified in his forward start, uplifted hand, and altered look, is also told in the most masterly language of Art; as is the silent admiration of Hephestion, whom the painter has judiciously marked as the elegant and intimate friend of Alexander, by his leaning with graceful familiarity on the king's couch. The intermixture of large with lesser and more complicated folds, the elegant flow of line in the drapery, and the beautiful proportions of all the forms, assist in perfecting a picture that is in every respect worthy of the hand that designed it, and of the celebrated biographer from whose description it is taken.

R. H.

Painted by W. West F.S.A.

Drawn & Engraved by J. Rowe.

CÆSAR'S REGRET WHILE READING THE LIFE OF ALEXANDER.

Published 2nd Oct.r 1809, by J. Rowe, 62, Berners Street.

PLATE VIII.

THE REGRET OF CÆSAR,

WHEN READING THE HISTORY OF ALEXANDER'S EXPLOITS, AT NOT HAVING SIGNALIZED HIMSELF.

THOUGH this subject is necessarily devoid of the lively interest produced by those actions of the human figure and those emotions of the mind, which call forth the peculiar graces and energies of each; it solicits regard as a pictorial record of the rising ambition of one of the most celebrated characters of antiquity. It exhibits the dawning of that eager desire of celebrity, which, obtaining its object at a profuse expense of human blood and happiness, is execrable to every justly reflecting mind, and forms an odious contrast to the laudable ambition, which delights in conferring benefits on the human race, and consequently in obtaining the only truly valuable applause, the praise of the wise and good. That Julius Cæsar's love of distinction should have taken a direction so destructive of the rights and happiness of mankind, is natural when it is considered that in his youth he was "abandoned to every species of voluptuousness and libertinism, and on these accounts became the proverb of the day, and that Alexander had already by his achievements earned immortality at an age at which Cæsar was still wallowing in the grossest sensuality." Such a sensual abandonment naturally tends to destroy those truly liberal and humane feelings which counteract ambitious propensity in the consideration of the evils it brings on humanity; and therefore as Cæsar was grossly sensual in his youth, so he was cruel and viciously ambitious at a maturer age. His intemperate devotion to the myrtle and the vine, was exchanged for an equally ardent but more injurious attachment to the laurel. This emblem of Victory he wore on a prematurely bald head, probably made so, as it often is in many, by licentious excesses. "Vice and passion," says Plutarch, in speaking of the deaths of Alexander and Cæsar," may be more or less tardy in their operations, but they never forego their claims on their votaries. Intemperance dispatched the one, and ambition the other; that ambition which, after making Cicero, Cato, and all the other good men of Rome his enemies, after having been associated with such an extreme of treachery and cruelty as to prompt him "to put to death many eminent officers whom he had taken at the battle of Thapsus; and violating a recent peace with the Germans, massacred in one bloody day, three hundred thousand men;" and in fine, after having sacrificed above a million of his fellow creatures, consigned him over to the daggers of his countrymen, and, notwithstanding his great talents, to an infamous immortality.

R. H.

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Drawn by M. Corbould. Engraved by H. Moses.

THE DESPAIR OF VENUS OVER THE DEAD BODY OF ADONIS.

Published Dec. 1. 1810 by H. Moses 84 Newman Street.

PLATE IX.

THE DESPAIR OF VENUS OVER THE DEAD BODY OF ADONIS.

The story of Venus and Adonis, of the coyness of the youth, his passion for the chase, and his death in the obstinate pursuit of it, is well known, and has been as often painted as poetized. Mr. West has chosen the point of time when the goddess first discovers her loss, and bursts out into a despairing lamentation at the sight.—The eye follows with delight the elegantly flowing lines of all the figures in their continuity, contrast, and delicate variation. The leading expression of grief is delineated with a most natural and pathetic gradation. The whole retinue of Venus partake in her affliction. Even the doves and swans, are sympathetically attracted by the tragic event. One of the dogs lies close to his master in mute concern, and two others in the back-ground, are assailing the flying boar, the author of the mischief, who with a significant and sidelong turn of his eye,—a touch worthy of Theocritus—is making off with all possible expedition. Two of the Graces—the waiting maids of Venus—are endeavouring to soothe their distracted Queen, while the third, who has just approached the calamitous scene, exhibits a mixed feeling of grief and surprise. The next in degree of sorrow is the little progeny of Love, who express their unhappiness with a tenderness appropriate to infancy. One looks regretfully at the beauteous corse; a second lifts up his arm, as if to be satisfied whether Adonis is really dead, and then looks at Venus in sympathetic conviction of the mournful fact; while others, alarmed, are shrinking from the appalling spectacle. Cupid himself more deeply affected in proportion to his sense of the loss, averts himself from it as from a sight too shocking to contemplate, and distressfully leaning his head on one arm, lifts up the other with an expression of acute and impatient feeling. The agony of Venus finishes the climax. It is characterized with an energy that absorbs every other thought, but without deteriorating in the slightest degree that winding elegance, and native sweetness of air which are the inseparable charms of the Queen of Beauty and of Love. The picture is indeed altogether a lovely one—busy without confusion, and impassioned without affectation.

R H.

THE CAVE OF DESPAIR.

PLATE X.

THE CAVE OF DESPAIR.

In Spenser's admirable poem of the Faërie Queene, in which the nature and progress of the virtues that lead human nature to its highest excellence, are represented under beautiful, though in some respects, dry and tedious Allegories, there is no description more masterly than that of the Cave of Despaire. The Poet exhibits an inexhaustible fertility of invention, and a justness and an animation in describing what he invents, that none but a truly great genius could be capable of. A deprivation of all hope, a horror and loathing of existence, bows the "man of hell" to the ground, and leads him to

> ——— "swords, ropes, poison, fire,
> And all that might him to perdition draw."

Nothing is wanting to complete the picture of Despaire in its most direful effects. The boding and "ghastly owl," the "wailing and wandering ghosts,"

> ——— "the dreary corse
> Wallowing in his own yet lukewarm blood,"

the "old stocks and stubs of trees" that "hang upon the ragged rock," and the self-murdered wretches that are suspended from it, exhibit in the Cave of Despaire, such a region of dismay and death, that, together with the delusive arguments of Despaire exciting to self-murder, and the awful painting he displays of

> "—— damned ghosts that doe in torment waile,
> And thousand fiends that doe them endlesse paine,"

work so deadly an effect on even Holiness itself, personified by the Red Crosse Knight, as to urge him to lift up his hand against his own life; which fatal purpose is prevented by Una, or Truth. All this rueful spectacle, so sublimely imagined and described by the Poet, the Painter has delineated with an energy that Spenser himself, we might venture to say, would have pourtrayed, had he wielded the pencil as well as the pen.

Mr. West has exhibited the terror of "the bare head Knight," who had before been nearly tempted by Despaire to destroy himself, with an expression the most natural and lively, while he shrinks behind his companion and his shield, to screen himself from the view and audience of the death-seducing and "grisly terror." The shield of the Red Crosse Knight,—the shield of Faith,—is as judiciously represented fallen from his arm, and the heads of the animals that carry Una and the Knight, crouched, as if even beasts partook of the terror of the scene. The terror consequent on Despair is thus carried to the highest possible extent of the Painter's as well as Poet's delineation.

R. H.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

THE ALARM OF NESTOR AT THE LIGHTNING WHICH PRECEDES HECTOR.

PLATE XI.

THE ALARM OF NESTOR AT THE LIGHTNING WHICH PRECEDES HECTOR.

Iliad, Book viii.

As it is impossible for a writer to give a just translation of a great poem unless he is not only master of the language in which he writes, but is also warmed by the glowing spirit of his original, so a painter would in vain attempt to embody a poetical story unless to his skill in embodying it with form, colour, light, and shade, he adds the diviner power of giving it the poetic soul. With such enthusiasm in the true sympathy of his art, has the Painter translated from Homer the description of this solemn incident.—Leaving the plebeian war in the back-ground, the chieftains, Diomede and Hector, are advancing towards each other in the consciousness of being able to settle the day's combat without wasting their strength on inferior objects:

"Let thou and I the battle try,"

It was however one of the days of Hector's glory, and Diomed was destined to advance in vain, though a great compliment is paid him by the very cause of his approaching flight; for the only thing which deters him from meeting Hector, and, as the Poet insinuates, from defeating him, is nothing less than a supernatural fire from heaven repeatedly visiting his progress. This is the moment of the picture; and by the selection of such a moment, as well as by his prominent part in the fore-ground, Diomed is evidently made the hero of the piece, as he well might be on such an occasion, notwithstanding his ill success: so artful is Homer in maintaining the general glory of his countrymen without diminishing that importance in Hector, which is so necessary to the superior glory of his final vanquisher Achilles. The situation is desperate, and the Painter has so described it, without making his hero partake of the despair.—It is thundering and lightening: the horses are rearing at the flames that dart in their faces: old Nestor, whom at the approach of Hector, Diomed had taken into his chariot, and who had undertaken to manage the reins, finds the task impossible, and is seized with a "sacred dread;" and in fine, Hector, by these awful signs, is coming up to sweep every thing before him, yet Diomed, for the moment, still remains unappalled, and lifting his shield over his head, as if to meet all the terrors that might assail him, grasps his javelin with a double energy for the combat. This elevation of the shield is a fine touch, not to be found in the original; and nothing can be contrasted more nobly than the two different modes in which the valour of the opponents manifests itself on account of the difference of situation,—Diomed having all his faculties on the stretch of undaunted resolution, yet from the surprise of the moment, not absolutely bent up; while Hector drawn by his steeds in good order, and holding out his javelin with a cooler preparation, is coming on with a kind of regal confidence, sure of his glory, and already proud of his triumph.

L. H. ☞

PRIAM PETITIONING ACHILLES FOR THE BODY OF HECTOR.

ATHENÆUM LIBRARY OF THE BOSTON ATHENÆUM

PLATE XII.

PRIAM PETITIONING ACHILLES FOR THE BODY OF HECTOR.

In this picture Mr. West has fully verified the remark of Mr. Pope, that "this interview between Priam and Achilles would furnish an admirable subject for a Painter." It is indeed one of the most affecting of the many pathetic incidents of the Iliad, and is one of those master-keys of Homer's enchanting poetry with which he unlocks the tenderest emotions of the heart. Priam had entered the inner tent of Achilles unseen by the attendants, and prostrating himself before the hero, embraced his knees, kissed his hands, and commenced a petition which softened the vindictive soul of Achilles into pity for the miseries of the aged monarch, who was reduced thus lowly to sue his enemy, and to kiss "those terrible, murderous hands that had robbed him of so many sons,—that had slain his subjects, and ruined his family and kingdom." One of the finest touches of Shakspeare's genius is where he makes Lady Macbeth recoil from her intention of murdering Duncan, in consequence of the feelings of parental love and reverence, which flashed on her flinty heart from recognizing in Duncan a likeness to her father:

> ———————Had he not resembled
> My father as he slept, I had done't.

So Homer, a like keen investigator of the human character, makes Priam effectually touch on this tender chord of the heart in commencing and concluding his address to Achilles, by reminding him of his father:

> Think of thy father's age, and pity mine.
> In me, that father's rev'rend image trace,
> Those silver hairs, that venerable face;
> His trembling limbs, his helpless person, see!
> —Think of thy father, and this face behold!
> See him in me, as helpless and as old!

The Painter has expressed to the extent that the pencil is competent to pourtray, this humiliating and pathetic imploring of an aged father for a favour from his greatest enemy. To indicate the object of this petition, Mr. West has made Priam point to his slain son, who is not, however, introduced by the Poet in this scene. In the poem it would have been at least superfluous; but as a Picture cannot, like Poetry, explain its subject by a detail of circumstances, but does it by the silent language of forms, and a glance or two of the eye, the Painter has judiciously indulged the license of introducing a new object, as materially assisting to the elucidation of his subject. The surprize that Achilles so forcibly expresses in common with his attendants at the sudden and venerable appearance of the Trojan Prince, is admirably associated with his peculiar characteristic of fierceness, a characteristic so strong, that even when he relented into compassion at the mournful suit of Priam, he could not avoid a sally of anger at the latter's slightly extending his petition beyond the circumstance of the restoration of his son's body. This momentary anger of Achilles at such a time, evinces the exquisite judgment of Homer in sustaining uniformity of character even in the midst of circumstances most adverse to its continuance.

R. H.

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LIBRARY OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

Painted by B.West P.R.A. Engraved by H.Moses

MOSES VIEWING THE PROMISED LAND.

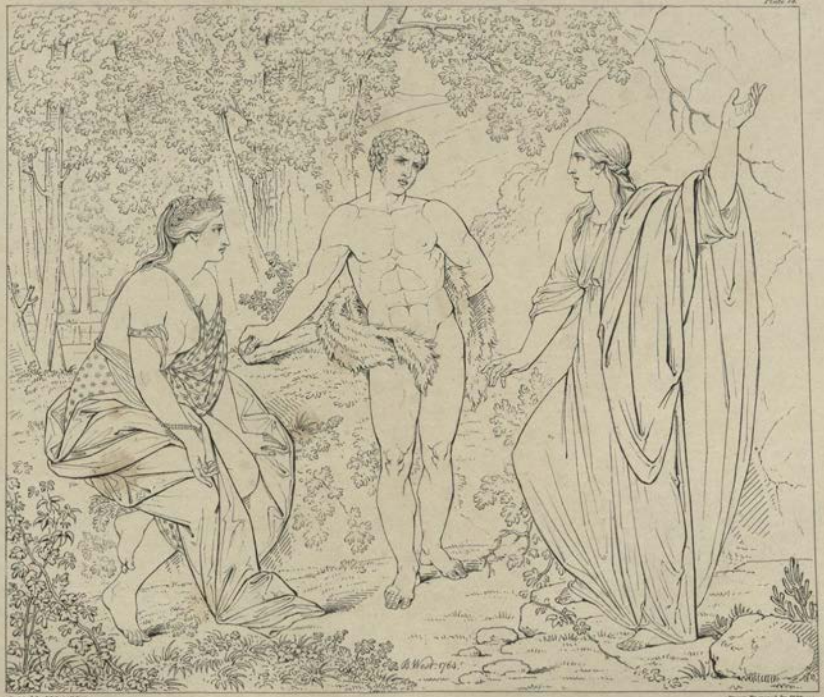
Published 1817 by H.Moses

PLATE XVII.

MOSES VIEWING THE PROMISED LAND.

No ordinary elevation of thought is required to form a suitable conception of a great character, but to be able to communicate to others an adequate impression of it, demands a luminous genius, and a mastery of the art by which the impression is made, whether it be verbal or graphical. Of such an enlarged ability we have a prominent instance in the impression made on our imaginations by this delineation. The importance of the main figure is indicated no less by the train of celestials engaged with him, than by the usually introduced radiance round his head, but still more expressively by his own personal dignity, and especially by the venerable aspect of his head. There is an agreeable novelty in his attitude, and his form throughout is admirably accordant to the scriptural account of his extraordinary vigour at the advanced age of a hundred and twenty,—"his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." This venerable and vigorous character, so beautifully contrasted by the delicate aspects of the angels, their earnestness in shewing the long desired land to the prophet, his expression of admiration on beholding it, the scientific display of drawing, and the tasteful simplicity of the composition, especially in the linear arrangement of the objects, render this one of the most unexceptionable productions of genius.

R. H.



Painted by Abbot R.B.A. Drawn Engraved by H.Moses

JUDGMENT OF HERCULES.

Published 1817 by H.Moses.

PLATE XIV.

THE JUDGMENT OF HERCULES.

THE story of the Judgment of Hercules, so familiar to general readers, came originally from Xenophon, and was told afterwards by Proclus the Platonic philosopher. It has been painted as well as versified by a number of hands, but seems upon the whole to have shared the fate of most allegorical and didactic stories, and to have been feebly and monotonously treated, for a subject apparently so provocative of strength and variety in the noble person and air of the heroic disdainer of vicious gratification, the blandishments of Pleasure, and the gracefully elevated character of her personified rival—Virtue. There is a weak picture of it by Pietro da Cortona, which has been engraved by Sir Robert Strange, and which the President seems to have had in his eye, not much to the benefit, perhaps, of his superior genius.

☞ L. H.

Painted by B. West, P.R.A. Engraved by H. Moore.

PYLADES AND ORESTES.

Published by H. Moore, Sept.1 1786.

PLATE XV.

PYLADES AND ORESTES.

To time well spent and talent well directed, this and the other numerous works of Mr. West bear ample and exemplary testimony. Extraordinary excellence in the Arts is mostly, if not always, the result of a wise and virtuous appropriation of the precious season of youth. By such honourable means was the Painter made competent to produce the beautiful original of this engraved outline at an early age, it being the first historical painting executed by Mr. West after his arrival in England from his youthful studies in Italy, many years before Republican France carried off the choicest remains of antique sculpture and the best works of the old masters. Exclusively of the original's uncommonly clear and powerful chiaroscuro and colour, this outline is sufficient, in the costume, and in the forms, actions, and composition of the figures, to shew how richly his young mind was imbued with a classical knowledge of those renowned works.

The subject is as follows:—

Orestes slew Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, in the temple of Apollo, in revenge for his marrying Hermione, who had been affianced to Orestes by her grandfather. For this sacrilege, Apollo ordered furies to haunt him, and compelled him to proceed to expiate the crime at the altar of Diana. His friend Pylades accompanying him to the altar, there presented himself to Thoas king of Taurica to be sacrificed, alledging that he was Orestes. At the awful instant when Orestes was to be sacrificed, Iphigenia, priestess of Diana, discovered him to be her brother, on which Thoas himself was sacrificed for his cruelties

R. H.

Painted by B. West P.R.A.

Drawn & Engraved by H. Moses

CHRIST CONVERSING WITH THE DOCTORS.

Published April 1.1803, by H. Moses, 82, Newman Street.

PLATE XVI.

CHRIST CONVERSING WITH THE DOCTORS.

THE main objects of painting are, to satisfy the judgment by displaying a clear, natural, and forcible conception of incident, and to delight the imagination by the beauty or sublimity of the medium through which that incident is conveyed. The ability to effect these objects constitutes the chief test by which the painter's genius, in common with that of the poet, must be estimated, and by which the artist, whose works are here outlined, is placed on so high an altitude of fame. Much of this lucid developement of the incident before us arises from the judicious employment of the hands in their expressive co-operation with the faces. As expositors of the mental and corporeal intent of the painter, they rank immediately after the faces, and are always aptly employed by the President. Indeed we may justly say of his figures that "they think from head to foot." Astonishment, profound attention and debate are depicted with an emphasis demanded by the subject, while the heavenly graces of mind and superior endowments of intellect that equally surprised and instructed, are beautifully blended in the face and form of Jesus, without in the least diminishing the suitable youthfulness of his appearance. The dresses are cast with Mr. West's usual grace and grandeur. They are tastefully subdivided in their folds, without destroying the requisite breadth.

R. H.

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